2007 - 08, a total of Rs.24193.47 lakhs and Rs.6271.04 lakhs have been released under the National River Conservation Plan and National Lake Conservation Plan respectively.

Wastage of products into coastal areas

666. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that some foreign companies have dumped the wastage of their products into our coastal areas;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government;

(c) whether Government has given any instruction to the State Governments who allowed foreign companies to dump their wastage which will cause severe negative consequences to the land and future generations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) According to the Central Board of Excise and Customs, no case of dumping of waste from the foreign companies has been noticed into our coastal areas.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Damage caused by plastic

667. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has assessed the extent of damage caused by plastic in the environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the steps taken/being taken by Government for the protection of environment; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and how far the public shall suffer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Plastics *per se* is not hazardous to environment. Plastics being non-biodegradable can be recycled many times, thereby has certain advantages over other materials like metals. Indiscriminate littering, improper collection and treatment may result in choking of drains, cattle's death on ingestion and making land infertile.

(c) and (d) The Government has notified "Plastics Manufacture, Sale and Usage Rules, 1999 as amended in 2003" to regulate use and manufacturing of Plastics carry bags, containers and recycling of plastics waste. The Ministry of Environment and Forests provides financial assistance for creating environmental awareness for management of plastics.

Development of forest villages of West Bengal

†668.SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new schemes being formulated by Government for the development of forest villages;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.